

DOE NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

September 30, 2005

2005 MARKED BY SUBSTANTIAL HANFORD CLEANUP PROGRESS

Two of three urgent risks now eliminated

The U.S. Department of Energy, Richland Operations Office (RL) and contractors Fluor Hanford and Bechtel Hanford made significant cleanup progress in fiscal year 2005 -- demonstrating commitment and dedication to safely cleaning up the legacy of the Hanford Site.

During the fiscal year, which ends September 30, workers eliminated the second of three of Hanford's most urgent risks -- completing the removal of about 2,300 tons of spent nuclear fuel from two water-filled basins located 400 yards from the Columbia River. In all, about 105,000 individual fuel assemblies were removed containing 50 million curies of radioactivity -- almost 95 percent of the radioactivity in the Columbia River Corridor.

It was also an outstanding year for working safely. Workers reduced the number of recordable injuries on RL projects by 50 percent since 2000.

Other key accomplishments for 2005 include:

- Disposing of more than a million tons of contaminated material in the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility, bringing the total disposed to more than 6 million tons since operations began in 1996.
- Completing 98 percent of the work to place H Reactor in interim safe storage for up to 75 years. When finished in early October, H Reactor will be the fifth of nine retired plutonium-production reactors to be placed in safe storage.
- Completing demolition of the 313 Building, a 79,000-square-foot fuel-fabrication facility located one mile north of the city of Richland.
- Completing disposal of 12,241 drums of contaminated waste from the 183-H Solar Basin, including 5,757 drums of unstable waste that had to be specially treated before disposal at the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility.
- Retrieving the first 13,500 of 75,000 drum equivalents of suspect-transuranic waste five months ahead of the Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) regulatory milestone.
- Completing the 100th shipment of transuranic waste in fiscal year 2005. To date, the site has made more than 221 shipments of transuranic waste, containing more than 6,400 drums, to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico for disposal.
- Completing removing plutonium material “held-up” in equipment and piping in the Plutonium Finishing Plant more than a year ahead of the TPA regulatory milestone. The project resulted in removing more than 500 drums of radioactive waste for shipment to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico for disposal.

- Disposing of 825 metric tons of low-enriched uranium fuel from Hanford's River Corridor more than a year ahead of the TPA milestone and \$1 million under budget.
- Demolishing 53 excess facilities near B Plant, U Plant, and in the 300 Area.
- Placing one of six groundwater pump-and-treat systems on standby status after removing the heart of the contaminant plume. More than 210 million gallons of groundwater have been pumped from wells near U Plant and more than 440 pounds of uranium and technetium-99 have been removed since treatment operations began in 1994. Monitoring of the site continues.
- Installing a cumulative total of 45 groundwater monitoring wells ahead of the TPA regulatory schedule; to date, 267 excess wells have been decommissioned.
- Awarding the Hanford River Corridor Closure Contract, which enables cleanup of 210 square miles to be completed by 2015 with significant incentives to finish by 2012. The work transitioned to the new contractor, Washington Closure Hanford, in late August 2005.

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RL-05-0007